

**Greenway Commission  
September 8, 2011**



**Members present:**

Jim Grode  
Marcia Bromberg  
Glen Locascio  
Sue Barlow  
Marc Hunt

**Staff present:**

Al Kopf, Superintendent of Planning & Development  
Seth Hendler-Voss, Landscape Architect  
Christy Bass, Business Services Supervisor  
Blake Esselstyn, Planning Department

Jim called the meeting to order at 3:36 pm.

**1. Review and approve August minutes**

Glen motioned to approve the August minutes, Marcia seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**2. Riverfront and Greenway Commission Meeting**

Jim stated that he had spoken to Stephanie Monson about the possibility of discussing what the Greenway Commission is doing as it relates to what the Riverfront Commission is trying to achieve. Jim asked if there was any objection to this outreach, and none was mentioned.

**3. CIP Greenway Planning Update**

Sue discussed a recent public outreach meeting and referenced some analysis that had been worked on since the Greenway Commission Meeting. Sue encouraged board members to review the matrix and analysis material. Marcia stated that there should be a meeting with Seth Hendler, Al Kopf and Stephanie prior to the October meeting. Sue stated that she will follow up with an email to the board. Marcia mentioned that the public session was a great meeting; Sue added that it was exciting that people were getting involved.

Glen thanked Al and Seth for putting together a comprehensive list with maps showing the various greenways. Glen added that he has been receiving lots of emails from people living in the Beaverdam area showing support for a corridor. Marcia reinforced that they have been tasked with trying to prioritize what projects gets planned. Glen stated that a segment near the Merrimon and WT Weaver corridor may not need to be as high on the prioritization list because of some newer sidewalks.

Roderick stated that it would be useful to have public input brought forward to the Greenway Commission so that a priority list can be reviewed at the same time to find out where interest lies.

#### **4. CIP public comment meeting discussion**

Jim stated that the Recreation Advisory Board will be having a public comment session for the CIP planning process. Roderick added that the Recreation Advisory Board is working through the same process that the Greenway Commission has already worked through. No input is required however, this is an invitation to come hear about not just greenways, but other recreation facilities and ball fields. The information gathered will allow staff to prepare and package the information for presentation to council. Roderick stated that the prioritization recommendations for the Recreation Advisory Board will go before council at the same time as the prioritization list for the Greenway Commission.

Jim stated that this could be a chance to provide input on facilities that have a link with a greenway. Roderick added that one master plan goal is connectivity and how do we link greenway corridors to recreation facilities. Marc commented that the bigger picture is the connection of greenways to other transportation elements such as sidewalks and bike lanes. Al stated that during the CIP budget process, the department heads work together to determine how money is spent and connected to other projects that the City is working on. Roderick added that there may be a greenway that is several years out on the priority list, but in the meantime, a department such as Public Works may be working on sidewalks and other infrastructure that will improve and enhance the greenway when it is built.

#### **5. Staff updates – Planning**

Blake stated that he attended a meeting that discussed the various adopted master plans and the effort to get them digitized and organized in the city's GIS system. This would allow residents to see where the overlaps exist and help the city coordinate different projects. This is not complete yet, but it will provide as a nice planning tool moving forward. He added that the Hunt Hill project might be coming back and will send an article out.

Jim asked if there was a timeline for this project to be completed. Roderick added that partial funding for this project is from the Tiger II grant money. The city's IT department has completed the initial overlay but still requires some fine tuning. He stated that it should be completed within the next six to eight months.

#### **6. Staff updates – PRCA**

Seth reported that they have been busy over the past month getting the greenway plans drawn up. Reed Creek phase 2 is about 60% completed and added that if you drive by the site, you will be amazed by the change and the amount of earth brought in to

reduce about a 15% grade. The bridge, stonework and trail preparation work will be beginning soon with an expected finish date of November. Marcia asked if there will be a ceremony for the opening. Seth stated that there will be however the timing has not been discussed yet. He added that they are getting ready for the Tiger II planning work of managing Town Branch and the Clingman Forest greenway. He added that for this project there will be a lot of collaboration with other department staff such as Transportation, Planning, and Public Works because there are so many components involved.

## **7. WDR RADTIP update**

Jim provided an update that on September 29<sup>th</sup> from 4-7 pm there will be a public update at the old train depot next to the Habitat for Humanity store.

## **8. Discussion of street closures**

Marc recapped the discussion from last month of the street closure between Nebraska and Nevada Street. He added that the meeting highlighted a couple of aspects for staff to consider as process reform and he that he had concerns about the way that street closures are brought forward. Marc stated that the initial street closure policy had been implemented by Jim Westbrook which stated that a citizen whose property adjoins a street can bring a petition to the city and it is guaranteed that city council will review that petition. Marc stated that he does not think that there is a thorough enough staff review of the project. Roderick added that about three years ago a process was developed but it never really took off and there still is a disconnect. He suggested having a conversation with Cathy Ball in Public Works about the street closure process so she can discuss it internally before this goes to council. Marc stated that a strategic goal of council and the city is to improve and increase compact development. Roderick stated that this should be started with staff to try to discuss the situation with other departments, especially since street closures fall under Public Works.

Glen asked if there was a way for someone to bring a potential closure to a preliminary level before a lot of money is spent on the process. Sue added that there are a lot of emotions that may not be based on factual information as it relates to last month's street closure discussion. Jim added that he will be happy to meet with staff when it is necessary and after the meeting with Cathy. Al agreed that these conversations will start at staff level with an update possibly at next meeting. Marc added that by closing this segment of Nebraska and Nevada that it protects the trees although the alternative is that the nine adjoining neighbors have the ability to cut down trees if they become part of their own property. He added that the Planning & Zoning Commission has the authority to advance things forward to council, with the Greenway Commission as advisory.

## **9. Asheville Parks and Greenway Foundation update**

Glen reported that at the last meeting they discussed the fundraising plan for parts of the splash pad at the new Livingston street center. A new member, Wayne Wheeler, is the

Recreation Advisory Board liaison along with Anthony Goodson from the Housing Authority.

#### **10. Buncombe County update**

Marcia reported that there was no meeting last month, but she talked to Lucy Crown about holding a meeting to discuss the connectivity between Asheville and the County. She did send an email out to commissioners with the dates for planning the master plan Connect Buncombe. Marc asked how the fiscal impact will be addressed as the plan is developed.

#### **11. Community Outreach committee report**

Sue reported that they were at the last Downtown After 5 with a board out and that it was a good venue to put the word out there. She added that the County has hired a group to assist their outreach program and she will try to get involved with this to see how it is done to replicate it here. She hopes to have more information by the next meeting.

#### **12. Asheville-Buncombe bicycle pedestrian task force report**

Jim reported that Cathy Ball spoke of the Lake Craig project out at the Nature Center and that it is still on-going and moving forward. They still do not know if the dam is structurally sound enough to be rehabbed. Jim mentioned that he is concerned that if the dam is not sound that this is the main part of the project and could be a problem. Al responded that there are teams of people testing the dam and proposing what if scenarios to determine the best plan.

#### **13. Other business**

None reported.

Jim adjourned the meeting at 4:56 pm.